

SPK L
F1028 B. 26. 22.
1852 J5-
REASON OR REVELATION;

5200
OR,

THE RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CIVILISATION
OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN,

CONTRASTED WITH

CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LEGITIMATE
CONSEQUENCES.

~~~~~  
BY THE REV. JOHN JENNINGS,  
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TORONTO.

~~~~~  
TORONTO:

PRINTED BY J. CLELAND, YONGE STREET,

1852.

NOTE.

THIS Tract is republished from the *Canadian Presbyterian Magazine*, in which it appeared in successive numbers. The Author has availed himself of the matter being in type, to throw off an edition in this form, which can be sold at a lower price than could have been the case otherwise. He is aware of its imperfections, arising from brevity of discussion on such an extensive subject, and also in other respects; but, as his desire is to do good, rather than to court literary notice, he hopes that his "labor will not be in vain in the Lord."

May God give His blessing on this effort to advocate His own cause.

TORONTO, }
1852. }

100815

REASON OR REVELATION;

OR, THE RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CIVILISATION OF THE ANCIENT
HEATHEN, CONTRASTED WITH CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LEGITIMATE
CONSEQUENCES.

INTRODUCTION.

In discussing this subject, there are two main objects aimed at:—

1st. To endeavour to correct prevalent errors, and show the worthlessness and falseness of that would-be intellectuality of those who foster and propound them; and who perpetually bring up the ancient past for admiration, and ascribe, with an inexcusable ignorance, or wilful perversion, great excellencies to ancient systems and times; to the deterioration of Christianity. Singular and inconsistent as it may seem, there are not a few who make a nominal profession of the recognition of the truth of the gospel, who are too ready, from the pride of reason, the desire to dignify what they call “the god-like qualities of humanity,” and from hasty, unhistorically-supported conclusions, to magnify the great era of heathen power and philosophy, and to hold it up as the golden age of the world’s intellectual might and social refinement, and to present a Solon, a Socrates, or a Plato, as a specimen of all that is wise and good, and to elevate such to a level with that “Teacher who came from God,” and who “spake as never man spake;” and thus would carry us back, and have us believe that “the former times were better than these.” There is a disposition in many to read the works of the ancient sages—at any rate to boast of their acquaintance with them, however shallow that may be—and to treat the wisdom of Jesus as if it were too common-place, too familiar to the vulgar to demand attention, and too humble to be worthy

of quotation. This ascription of intellectuality and refinement to the pre-christian era is at the basis of infidelity, and most unduly exalts the one, while it most unjustly degrades the other. It is a practice which originates in that *little* learning which is a dangerous thing; which has been encouraged by a modern "vain philosophy," and propagated by a certain class of ethical writers, and the flimsy and sceptical *literateurs* of the present day.

2nd. The next object in view is, to maintain the true prominence of Christianity, as the only system that is competent to elevate the world, and which embodies in it all the elements of true religion, true morals, true philosophy, and true civilisation. And by advocating Christianity, it is not to sermonise, but to take up the system in its principles and operations, and compare and contrast it with all other systems. There is a prevailing misconception of it—a one-sided view of its principles and tendencies, which amounts to an error—by which it is not extended to its perfect work but circumscribed and contracted in its design and powers. It is not sufficiently viewed as a complete, divinely given system, for the restoration and government of the world. It is looked at too often solely as teaching the fact of a better world, and how we may attain it—and that is a great and most important part—but it is not confined to that, for it does not only simply inculcate our devotional obligations, but it embraces every thing that relates to our temporal state and social improvement. It contains the true principles of political economy, and of all legislative science; and gives the grand directions for the amelioration of the physical world, and the education, refinement, and happiness of man. It is the moral lever for upheaving the earth, and all that it inhabit, from every existing false and ruinous position. As the curse was universal on nature, brute, and man, Christianity is universal, as the universal antidote. In this sense, the true, whole sense, we mean it, and fearless as to the issue, we invite that it be contrasted with all the speculations, theories, and systems of men.

It must be obvious to all, that the subject is one of very great extent, as, in fact, it ransacks the history of the ancient heathen world, and the conclusions cumulate in proportion to the scrutiny that is made of Paganism, and the contrasting investigations into the developements of Christianity. Volumes might be written on it; and very necessary and profitable ones too: for though several of its parts, under various titles, have been discussed by Tholuck, Spring, and one or two others, yet, as a

whole
terpr
porta
argu
breve
enqui
tions
facts
they
woul
one v
the c
with
nent
neces
etern
more
and a
in the
Chris
its m
had n
were
world
but t
come
head
but t
Righ

THE

U
1st
ancie

whole, it is a fresh and most important topic for the earnest mental enterprise of some writer on the Christian Evidences. But extensive, important, and fascinating as it is, and though there is no want of facts and arguments, we are limited in this mode of presenting it, to a reasonable brevity, and therefore, instead of going minutely over the whole field of enquiry, must look only at the chief points; and instead of giving quotations in proof of what is asserted, must simply state what we believe are facts, and dogmatically draw our conclusions, leaving the readers, whether they doubt or believe, to investigate fully for themselves. Indeed, we would rather provoke personal inquiry, for we are well assured that no one who will candidly and diligently set himself to the study, and draw the contrast, but will arrive at the conclusion, not simply that Christianity, with its whole offspring of piety, philosophy, and civilization, is pre-eminent over all kinds and degrees of heathenism, but, that it is absolutely necessary for the true and the best, physical and temporal, spiritual and eternal, interests of mankind. As the sun in its gorgeous majesty confers more blessings on this world, than all the stars that gem the night sky; and as by day their light is unseen because of a greater, and it is only in the night, when there is no sun, that their lustre is perceived; so, Christianity rises on the moral horizon of the world, and as it ascends to its meridian altitude, the systems of men, which might shine when they had no such competitor, now sink away, and are obscured as lights that were, but whose glory is outshone. The religious systems of the pagan world were as the torches of men, kindled at the fires of the natural mind, but this is "THE LIGHT, THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and which is kindled at the source of the Godhead. The others were the twinklings of unaided or distorted reason, but this is the effulgence of divinity, the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness.

PART I.

THE FIRST PART OF THE SUBJECT IS, THE RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CIVILISATION OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN; OR THE EVIDENCE THAT REASON ALONE IS NOT A COMPETENT INSTRUCTOR AND GUIDE FOR MAN.

Under this part we consider

1st. The moral and spiritual characteristics of the various systems of ancient religion. Undoubtedly the first religion was divine in its origin.

Man was created in his Maker's image, and his religion was part of that image—it was written on his heart, and might be called constitutional ; but after he fell from pristine purity, that was lost, and a new type of religion was introduced—a kind caused by new necessities—a system not of simple obedience, love, and communion, but of reconciliation ; and though we have not the precise form, we have the historical fact in the recognition of a divinely appointed mode of worship. In the case of Cain, we find not only the first introduction of religious error, or self-will, in forming what he conceived to be religious obligation, when he attempted to worship by a mode that had not the divine sanction, but also, that there was a mode which he would not embrace. He took the ground of a proud moralist, and not that of a humble suppliant. He brought his thank-offering, but not his sin-offering. He prayed, "give me this day my daily bread," but would not pray, "forgive me my trespasses." He refused to acknowledge the doctrine of propitiation ; and this proves that this doctrine had been divinely taught ; for why condemn him for what he knew not ? or why approve of Abel's sacrifice of the "firstlings of his flock," additional to his offering of the fruit of the ground, if he did it only by accident ? And if Cain had not known better—if he had not had some revelation as to the duty, nature, and design of certain sacrifices—why should the language of God be addressed to him as one who knew his duty but would not do it ?—"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door ;"* that is, at *his* door, because he refused to comply with the Divine mode through which God would accept the sinner.——The religion of the patriarchs—a succeeding and slightly enlarged edition of the former—was still of the same primal or elementary character. It recognised the one true God, the facts of sin and a way of propitiation, exhibited by a symbolical confession of the one and faith in the other, on the ground of the early promise of the coming Messiah, the seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent.——The religion of the Jews was of the same character. It was the full enlargement and completion of the elementary or typical system ; but though it was wrapped up in symbols, and carried out by a laborious and costly ceremonial, still, it contained in it all the great principles of

* Though we accept the translation, "a *sin-offering* lieth at the door," referring to some authorised animal for sacrifice, which Cain could have taken and laid on the altar, the fact and argument are still unaffected.

religio
image
social
suited
likely
spiritu
ciatin
mean
a pec
"as t
ther ;"
rience
to bri
yste
Bu
shad
can e
type
had
give
stan
cultu
sens
rites
beco
exh
and
wo
us
of
hav
we
an
pla
ha
str
ioc

religious truth. The tendency of the rude and uneducated mind is to imagery and ceremony, and God thus adapted religion to the mental and social progress of man, and invested its truths in forms and customs best suited to those to whom it was communicated, and by which it was most likely to be retained. The world was not then prepared for a completely spiritual religion, and it only received that which it was capable of appreciating. As the child requires a peculiar training and adaptation of means to his desires and faculties, so the childhood of the world required a peculiarity of religious system to prepare it for its maturity. It was "as an heir under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father," when risen, so to speak, to its majority, through the previous experience and training, then, "God sent forth his Son" as the great Teacher, to bring it from the elementary condition and character, and divulge a system of a spiritual, universal, and perpetual nature.

But we pass from the divinely instituted religious systems—or rather the shadowy phases of the one system—to those directly under review. We can contrast Judaism with Christianity, and show that the one was the type, the other the reality; that the former was the "coming event which had cast its shadow before." We can prove, that the religious system given to the Jews, was only adapted to their national design and circumstances, which confined them to their own land, and made them an agricultural, rather than a commercial, nation; which shut them in, in every sense, as a peculiar people; and that their institutions, temple, priesthood, rites, emblems and law, rendered it an impossibility that it ever could become universal;—but we have now to consider the other systems, as they exhibited the tendency and utmost powers of the unaided human reason, and thus we will see what the mind, religion, morals, and civilisation are worth, when left without the teaching of God.

The first form of an idolatrous religion, the nature of which history gives us any data to judge, was called Sabatism, and consisted in the worship of the firmamental bodies. Before the flood, it is evident that there must have been idolatry, for "the whole earth had corrupted its way," though we cannot tell of what kind it was; but early in the post-deluvian age, and after the dispersion at Babel, the tendency to idolatry rapidly displayed itself. Tribes were then formed, separated, and scattered; and having only had a traditionary faith, and away from the control, instructions, and priesthood of the great line of patriarchs, and left to tribal independence, to corruptions introduced, and the truth in tradition for-

gotten, and to the vain imaginations natural to the human heart, each altered the parent religious belief, and changed customs and worship; and the truth thus became so mixed up and diluted with religious fancies, arising both from ignorance and perversion, from fear and folly, that it could not be discerned. Error thus grew till it formed into a system; and that first systematised form of idolatry, was Sabaism, and had its origin in western Asia. Mankind gradually lost the knowledge of the true God, of his Being and attributes, but still looking upward to powers supreme, formed the idea that the sun and moon were the two great divinities;—the one they called the King, and the other the Queen of heaven—and to each they gave a peculiar homage. They, then, further supposed them to be parents, and that all the stars were their offspring, and to the most brilliant of these they gave names and worship. When once this idea was fixed in their minds, they next attributed peculiar functions and powers to each, and thence began the opinion of lucky and unlucky stars—thence originated the whole system of ancient astrology—which, instead of recognising the one, supreme, over-ruling Providence, led to the most erroneous conceptions of astral influence. That, then, was the first step. It was leaving the Creator to worship his works—it was multiplying their gods—it was still looking upwards—it was still seeing their divinities in the heavens—but having lost God, they lost the first truth and purity of religion; and there was but another step, which they soon took, to form idols on earth—likenesses of what they supposed were the gods, in the sun, moon, and stars; and to these they began to pay their worship, and thus their foolish minds became darkened; and even when “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” From Sabaism, then, was all idolatry derived. It was the first step that man took from the throne of God; and we will find that the human race declined exactly in proportion, as their religion became more and more “of the earth, earthy;” and from this great parent system of error, we can see that all subsequent systems bore evidence of their paternity.

Next in age was the Egyptian religion. Sabaism was succeeded by material, terrestrial, idolatry. The religious sentimentalism connected with celestial objects, gradually decayed, and the earth took the place of the sky in furnishing gods; and Egypt—the boasted Egypt—ranked the first in making, worshipping, and extending, the lowest and meanest sys-

tem the
grading
the po
and ph
held th
Being,
Thus t
to kno
ing go
ary tru
give co
vine p
choose
called
tion o
was c
eated
school
their s
whole
they h
system
the g
the ch
attrib
that h
their
anima
forme
spring
was
their
all g
nume
ment
wors
T
the i

tem that was, or is, or can be. It was full of the most fantastic and degrading absurdities, and yet it seems to have had a kind of dignity through the pomp which attended it, and by the pretended mysteries, learning, and philosophy which supported it. The ancient Egyptian philosophers held the eternity of mind and matter, and represented one Great Mind, or Being, as presiding over all other gods in the spiritual and material worlds. Thus they held the fact, it is true, of One Supreme Being, but they failed to know and worship him as he is, and they degraded him, by making gods to divide his glory. They kept up this fact as a dim traditional truth, but though they held it, it was a mere philosophical myth, to give consistency to an idolatrous theory, and that they might have a divine parentage for every thing, real or imaginary, which they might choose to worship. This Supreme Mind was the god Ammon—evidently called after their progenitor Ham, if indeed it was not an actual deification of him—in whose honor the city of No Ammon, or Thebes, was called, and where was the splendid temple which, though dedicated to him, was in fact their pantheon; and where were also, the great schools, or colleges, of religion and philosophy. To Ammon, was joined their supreme goddess Neith, or Neitha, and from these two came the whole offspring of divinities, to which, according to the supposed offices they held, religious service was paid. This was the department of their system which may be called their *celestial* idolatry.——They had next, the god Osiris, united to the goddess Isis, and which seem to have been the chief powers of earth, hades, and the infernal regions, Osiris had attributed to him many functions similar to the Pluto of the Greeks; and that he took charge of the souls of men after death, and according to their doctrine of metempsychosis, had the power to send the soul to animate another body, whether of a reptile or a man, as he judged the former merits deserved. From Osiris and Isis there was another offspring of lesser divinities, with their several powers and offices. This was the second great department of their system, which may be called their *infernal* idolatry. It was worship to the celestial gods to do them all good; and to the infernal gods to do them no harm.—To these innumerable, great and little gods of good and evil, they had a third department, which may be called their *terrestrial* idolatry, or visible objects of worship, such as the Nile, the crocodile, the serpent, and the cow.

The whole system was an immense conglomeration of the conceptions of the imaginative and the devotional, run mad, and no efforts of power, and

expense were spared to carry it out; and so extensive, as well as honorable was the priesthood, so rich were the temples, and so important, laborious, and punctilious was the worship, that the first born of every Egyptian family was entitled, if not required, to study and rank as a priest. This was the line of the priesthood, and thus it—what may be called the church—came to hold the superior proprietorship or lordship of the soil of the whole country, and the mass of the people were the mere serfs. On this fact we can see and understand the design of the extraordinary judgment of God, when the first born of every family was doomed to death by the destroying angel. By the hand of Moses, Jehovah had proved himself “high above all gods” in their celestial or infernal catalogue. The plagues came, and by these their celestial gods were shown to be powerless for good; yea, even their great god, the Sun, was overcome by “a darkness that might be felt;” and their infernal gods, according to their belief, were shown to be active against them in the hail, the locusts, and the murrain; and the objects of their terrestrial worship were destroyed. The temples became polluted, so that there could be no service in them; and the people became polluted, so that they could not worship though their temples had been clean. Their sacrifices, too, were all destroyed; and thus by judgment on judgment, they were left without the help of their gods, and without the means and opportunity to propitiate them; and, last of all, by one terrible swoop, to consummate the destruction, and display the majesty of the God of Israel, the whole priesthood was annihilated.

The religion of Egypt is often spoken of as philosophical and refined, but we ask, was that either philosophy or refinement, which led to the worship of gods they knew not what or where—the creations of wild and superstitious fancies and fears—and which condescended even to pay religious honors to the river, the reptile, and the brute? No, for while there is a fictitious honor thrown around the throne of the Pharaohs and the history of a once famous land, yet the religion was a mystery to the people, a trade to the priests, and a curse to all. Egypt may stand prominent for the magnitude of her idolatrous establishment, but not one sound religious principle can be found in her annals; and the most favourable facts we can gather, are only testimonies to the folly of a people who had lost the knowledge of the true God, and in the blindness of their minds—the light that was in them being darkness—were wandering helplessly in the dark fields of religious fiction, and self-creating the more horrible and the deeper pitfalls into which they plunged.

The next in order of time—if not, indeed, developed as early as that of Egypt—is the religion of Babylon, or Chaldea. Under this, Nineveh, or the Assyrian Empire may be embraced. Regarding the latter, little, comparatively, is known of an accurate nature. The Bible is silent on its history, from the time that Asshur led forth the Babylonian colony to the banks of the Tigris, till the reign of Jeroboam, II. King of Israel; a period extending over more than 1200 years. The reputed history of that empire, by Herodotus, is also lost. The spade and the mattock are now the only means by which its annals may be dug from its ruins; and an indistinct little has, as yet, only been gathered from the exhumations, by Rich, M. Botta, and chiefly by the enterprising Layard. Yet, considering its derivation from, its presumed long dependance on, its proximity to, and its commercial and social interchange with Babylon; and from references to its idolatry, gleaned from the Bible, when it had attained great power, and become a formidable enemy to Israel and Judah, there is every reason for believing that, in characterising the religion of Babylon, that of Nineveh is embraced; and which, if not actually the same in all minute points, had still all the great lineaments of a faithful counterpart.

The religion of Babylon was the same in character as that of Egypt, for the same primitive ideas are transparent; only there are these differences, that there seem to have been few, if any, terrestrial objects worshipped, except images representing celestial divinities; that these were the same divinities, only with other names; and that the religious rites were celebrated, if it were possible, with greater grossness and impurities. There were at the head, and as the parent of the whole idolous progeny, the supreme god Bel, and the supreme goddess Mylitta; the one representing the sun, and the other the moon. To Bel, the Babylonians paid constant worship in gorgeous temples, and also in sacred enclosures, in which the image was erected; and before which, the sacred fire—the emblem of the sun—was constantly fed; and into which human beings were thrown, as propitiatory and honorary offerings. An instance of this is recorded by Daniel, when Nebuchadnezzar made an immense golden image of the supreme idol, and set it in the plain of Dura; and had the large sacred court* of fire burning before it, and commanded that all who would not fall down and worship, should be doomed as sacrifices to his

* The "burning fiery furnace" was in front of the idol, and was simply a court, open above, and walled round on the sides.

god ; and which fate, the three noble Hebrew youths were subjected to, though they were preserved in the face of Babylon's idol, and rescued from his supposed omnipotence, by one who walked with them, and who was "like the Son of God." The mode of worship was by offerings to the temple, victims to the fire, wild gesticulations, and agonizing prayers. An illustration of the mode of supplication, when all offerings had failed to bring the response, we find in the history of Elijah. The worship of Bel or Baal had spread over Israel ; and that the question of superiority might be decided between the true and the false God, the prophet challenged the idolatrous priests to try the respective powers of their Gods. Baal represented the sun, or fire ; then let the decision be by fire. The prophet challenged them in their strongest position, "the God that answereth by fire let him be God." The priests cried "from morning even till noon, O Baal, hear us." Elijah mocked them in bitterest sarcasm, and that, along with no heaven-sent fire, excited them to frenzy. The desperation of defeat, and being forsaken by their god, made them cry with intense importunity, leap on the altar, cut themselves with knives and lances, and present the horrible spectacle of gashed and blood covered men.

The Babylonian Bel was derived from the same false idea, and held the same idolatrous position, as did the Ammon of the Egyptians, the Baal of the Midianites, the Moloch, Milcam, or Malcham of the Canaanites ; the Chemosh of the Moabites ; the Herakles or Hercules of the Tyrians ; the Jupiter of the Greeks, and the Jove of the Romans.

The female divinity, Mylitta, or queen of heaven, had temples dedicated to her, also, but her rites were chiefly observed in groves and on high hills. These are too gross to permit of detail, and it is enough to say, that they consisted of the most licentious orgies, and her sacred places, as they were called, were scenes of unbounded and unblushing prostitution. This supreme goddess of the Babylonians was the same, with the same rites, as the Egyptian Isis ; the golden calf that the Israelites made at Sinai, and to which they paid homage in music, dances, and lustful revelry ; the same as the Phœnician Ashtaroth or Astarte ; the Ephesian Diana ; the Grecian Juno ; and the Roman Venus. Thus the primitive Sabaistic idea came down and covered the ancient heathen world, and though the names of the two chief deities differ in different nations, yet no one can fail to see the close resemblance that everywhere prevailed.

We now turn to Persia. The religion of the Persians was, at first, the purest of all forms of idolatry. It was the worship of the sun, as the Supreme Being, with fire as the emblem, and the only visible thing religiously recognised in their temples. But such a simple form did not long continue, and other firmamental bodies were added and deified. Their religious notions were certainly, at first, the most intellectual and refined of all the heathen; but even with the wisdom of Zoroaster, and when, with a great mind, he attempted to bring light out of darkness, and truth out of fable, yet his creed, however ingenious, failed to satisfy. The experience of ages has proven, that mankind, with human reason only to guide them, can never remain stationary in an intellectual idolatry; and so it was in Persia, and in defiance of all the wisdom of the magi. Their recognition of a great power, symbolised by fire, left them still with an unknown God, and therefore there was no salutary influence operating on their moral being and social relations; and their religious notions ended, like all the others, in a multiform and debasing idolatry. They began with a Supreme Being, but, losing revelation, they deified the sun; and fears, fancies, and passions gradually introduced other objects; and at last, ancient Persia became a nation with idols crowded in its temples, and obscenity in their courts; with polygamy in the households, despots on the throne, and oppression and turbulence in the state.

Let us glance at the religion of Greece. There we find idolatry in all its intellectual majesty; with sages to correct its errors, and shew—if they could—a more excellent way; with historians to narrate the births and characters of the gods; and with poets to write and sing paeans to their honor. At first it was the worship of the sun and moon—by the names of Jupiter and Juno—but rapidly, idol was added to idol. The very intellectuality of the Greeks made them encrease their idol catalogue, for they were satisfied with none, and they sought for, and made more. They were lost in idolatry, and knew not how to extricate themselves; and their only hope was in having more gods, that, perchance, they might find the true one at last. From every known country, idols and forms of worship were imported; and religion thus became a search, rather than a conviction to the wise, and a degrading and unintelligible observance to the ignorant. The very magnitude of their idolatry perplexed them, and they became lost in the imaginative and superstitious labyrinths which they created, and were obliged to extend in hope of release, though, in fact, only to be the more completely bewildered. The philosophers reasoned, and asked, what, and where is truth? but they were perpetually baffled. They be-

lieved that there was a God, the true God, but they knew not how, or where, to find Him, and at last had to come to the humiliating confession of ignorance, and, in the very capital of their wisdom and their schools, acknowledge the inability of reason to discover what reason still taught them must be true—for their reason led them by induction to see its own insufficiency—and in token of defeat, and also of a faith that no ray of revelation had enlightened, they erected an altar, and dedicated it to "The Unknown God." Such was the religion of Greece; it made its priests traffickers in popular superstitions; its sages sceptics; and its people slaves.

Now let us look at Rome. Greece was called refined—Rome was majestic. At first the religion was a simple, unostentatious idolatry, and evidently brought from the East; but just as her arms conquered, her power extended, and her fame increased, so did her idolatry. She seemed to glory in gathering all the idols of the known world for her worship. Greece gathered from the East, and Rome gathered from Greece. She had gods and goddesses—of heaven and hell, earth and sea, love and lasciviousness, peace and war, plenty and famine, music and grief. Every sense, passion, and power, was personified, and idolised. She, besides, deified many of her celebrated warriors and emperors, and installed them in her pantheon. She had her temples, with their priests, augurs, and vestal virgins. The religion at length became even a terror to the nation, as every passion or vice could be made sacred, by the declared devotion of it to the divinity to which it was professed to be paid; and thus a man could bring his crimes under the shelter of the temple, and, by the plea of religion, have a license for unlimited licentiousness. The more learned declared that they did not believe it, only, they openly acknowledged it because the populace must have a religion, and to encourage their superstitions, made them more subservient as subjects. There was the *theologia philosophica*, which was the infidelity of the learned, as regarded all gods; and there was the *theologia civilis*, which was the inculeation on the ignorant, of a superstitious reverence for all. Thus the priest maintained his apparent sanctity, the augur his mysterious prophetic intelligence, and the vestal virgin her mock-modesty, and all concealed their smiles at the credulity of the people. Thus Seneca says, "It becomes us to pray to the great multitudes of common gods,—which, during a long period, a diversified superstition has collected,—with this sentiment, that we are con-

vinced that the reverence displayed to them, is a yielding to custom rather than what is due to real truth. The philosopher will observe prayer, as commanded by the civil law, and not as gratifying to the gods." Thus the idolatry, while it was tenaciously held by the mass of the people, was kept up by the powerful and the intellectual as a police establishment, and in which, as political economists—not as religionists—they had an interest. Ancient Rome—proud Rome!—exhibits what human power and philosophy can do, in making a religion for man; and the sad spectacle we see is, that her very religion encouraged hypocrisy and licentiousness, and did more to brutalize her than if she had adopted—had it been possible—pure atheism, and had never had a temple or a god.

From these brief notices of the leading characteristics of ancient heathen religion, we arrive at two indisputable facts.—First—that all ancient idolatry had one great common origin. There was certainly, at first, the knowledge of the true God, but "when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations," and "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." The natural mind and imagination everywhere ran in the same track, and either intuitively conceived the same idolatrous ideas, or willingly copied and adopted those which had been already propounded; for we uniformly find that the idolatries of all nations—though wide apart in point of time and distance—bore a great and remarkable family likeness.—Second—we find that not one nation that had departed from the knowledge of the true God, ever, without revelation, found its way back, but, instead, that in every case the idolatry was downward—more multiplied—more corrupting—more degrading—and in no case was the religious sentiment pure, the reason of the inquirer satisfied, or the state secure. The intellect was crushed under the weight of superstition; the reason was in darkness because it had extinguished the divine light; and mankind were without God and without hope in the world.

Infidelity, in its opposition to Christianity, may talk and boast of heathen religion, but nowhere are its excellencies to be seen. It had gods, for whose existence a proud and evil imagination was the only authority; it had priesthoods that lived and ruled on the fears, the ignorance, the superstition, and the complete demoralisation of the multitude; and for a man who may profess any intelligence, and regard to reason and decency of social life, to contrast the very best system with

Christianity, and even to insinuate that the former is as good, or as well adapted for man as the latter, is to outrage reason, and insult our common sense, morality, and civilisation; and not ours only—but also of the many lately debased savages, who now, little as they know, still know the blessed and immeasurable difference, between what they were and what they are, as they have “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.”

2nd. The second point for consideration is, **THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN.**

According to modern definitions, Philosophy is said to be the “science of reason,” or, the “science of the fundamental truths of human knowledge.” At present, we speak of it as applied by the ancient sages to all their investigations into *theology, ethics, mental and moral philosophy*; and the definition given by Cicero is, therefore, the most suitable and comprehensive that we can take. He called it the “science of things human and divine.” The objects of it were declared by the heathen philosophers to be, to ascertain and determine by reason, “**THE TRUTH,**” or the primary principles or causes, and consequences, in relation to everything—God, man, mind, matter, the past, present, and future. Heathen philosophy was based on the assumption that it was within the province of reason to disclose every truth, and to direct to the fulfilment of every obligation. Let us see how it realised its boast.

The kind of religion that is conscientiously embraced by a man, is a sure index to the character of his philosophy. If the religion be from heaven, and be held as the guide to all sound knowledge, then the philosophy will be established on divine principles; but, if the religion be of man—a devotional conglomerate of the hopes, fancies, and fears of his natural mind—then the philosophy will just be its reflection. On the other hand, if the philosophy be of man, and be held competent to institute religion, then religion must be human; but if the philosophy be from heaven, then it, in fact, becomes a revelation. Here we put ancient heathenism in a dilemma. Was the religion divine, and did it originate the philosophy? Then why such a philosophy that was changeable in its principles, and unsatisfactory in its results? Or, was the philosophy from heaven, and did it make the religion? Then why were not the sages satisfied with their own production? We can argue thus; that if the religion of the ancient heathen directed their philosophy, then as “a clean thing cannot come from an unclean,” no philosophy could be sound that was derived from a source

in which there were not the very first principles of truth. Or, on the opposite, if their philosophy framed their religion, then, from what has been already shown, it was false in its principles, and degrading in its maxims. It is of no importance which view is taken, for we arrive, by either, at the same conclusion, that a false religion cannot give a sound philosophy, nor a sound philosophy give, or admit a false religion. The only system that will completely answer our argument is, Christianity; for it is a revelation; and alike a system of philosophy, and of religion.

Rationalists, those who make the deductions of reason their faith, magniloquently represent that reason as almost omnipotent and omniscient for any purpose; and having eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they believe that their eyes are so opened, and their mental vision is so clear, that they can dispense with the light of divine revelation;—yea, they would even call it darkness. They but illustrate the fact, that Satan still works successfully with his old device—unbelief—which he teaches is not a sin but a virtue, and that by it men “shall be as gods.” The infidel will tell us, with an air of self-sufficiency and superiority, that the best book to read is the Book of Nature, for in it are no superstitions, miracles, mysteries, or threatenings, to stupify, perplex, or terrify; and that we can, in the most pure and entranced devotion, be “led from Nature, up to Nature’s God;” but we deny the truth of the hackneyed assertion, for we never have had evidence of the extatic devotionism of Nature’s devotees; we have never heard of men, where nature smiles the fairest, and its bounties are spread the richest, and where the “o’erhanging canopy” is most gorgeously begemmed with shining worlds, being taught by the things that are made to recognise and adore the one “Eternal power and Godhead.” Unaided reason has never discovered moral and religious truth. The experience of six thousand years has demonstrated the fact, not that man can find truth after he has lost it, but that the tendency has been, when he has allowed reason to be undirected by revelation, to lose the truth which he possessed. A eulogy may be pronounced on the mental faculties, as a veil to conceal the opposition to revelation, and that the sceptic may the better enshrine reason as his divinity; but faithful history declares the fact that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” Examine most narrowly the philosophy of the ancients from all sources, and through all channels, and where is the world of light into which it came? Take up the Pagan philosophers—those men whom infidelity holds forth as proofs of the triumphs of reason—and allow

them to have possessed the highest gifts that ever Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, gave to men, and how do they appear to us, when judged by our intelligence? We allow, that they were men of great and independent minds, and too wise to be satisfied with the religion that prevailed, but not wise enough to propound any that was better. They were men struggling in darkness to grope their way to the light, but never could perceive it: and we will maintain, in the face of all controversy, that a well-educated boy of ten years of age, in our own land, now knows more of the real elements of truth, and of true philosophy, theological and natural, than all the sages of all the past put together! and why? because they had their knowledge only from within, from reason—from Nature, the infidel's god—while our own youth are taught by the clear voice of celestial wisdom. Even the great Socrates and Cicero would have rejoiced to have known what our children learn; and were they to rise from the dead and live again, would find in an infant class, more than their equals in the highest philosophy. The ancient philosophers reasoned!—it is true—but they never—not one of them—found a certain moral or religious principle on which to erect a system, and their perpetual differences, changes, and inconsistencies prove that, though wisdom was their search, doubt and controversy were all they attained. Their morals, and religious dogmas, or doctrines, were almost all directly, or indirectly, immoral, and had a baleful influence on the opinions and practices of those who embraced them. They never could reason out, who, what, or where, the true God is, and consequently, could never find out what was the true worship. They never could penetrate the mystery of existence, the organisation of matter, the rule of duty, or the fact and nature of a future state of existence. All was speculation—vast, anxious, and profitless—and their minds, without a great truth to direct them, were tossed, like a rudderless ship, on the shoreless expanse of visionary ideas; and all their systems were utterly powerless to subdue or resist moral corruption, and a debasing polytheism.

Turn to Egypt, for example, where pagan philosophy first rose to eminence, and while there is no doubt that there the philosophers had attained to some measure of knowledge in the arts and sciences—though by no means to so great as is sometimes asserted—yet their very religion proves, that in point of actual intelligence, they were far from being wise. Their mythology was very much founded on, and governed by astronomy, which was esteemed not a natural science but a religion, and the consulta-

tion of the stars was the means by which they obtained their revelations. Astrology therefore became their only, but false, substitute for inspiration; and the horoscope was their empirical pretension to possess the gift of prophecy. Egyptian philosophy! it has been extolled, but where is its excellence? What little we do know of it is worthless, and that which is guessed at, and said to be valuable, we repudiate till we shall have the proof. We have never found even one sound moral, religious, or scientific principle in the whole history of that nation: and though in the crypts of Thebes, and the temples of Memphis, the priests, or philosophers—for they were the same—had their mysteries, and under the assumption of these, and by propagating the notion that they possessed great knowledge, made men believe that they were extraordinarily wise, yet Pythagoras, when allured by their wide fame to visit their schools, and after spending twenty years in trying to acquire all that they could teach him, returned without one new satisfactory principle. And though their study chiefly related to astronomy—at any rate their whole philosophical theories hinged on their astronomical opinions—yet they really knew less about that science than what is taught in the junior classes of our common schools. Less! rather we should say that they were profoundly ignorant of its simple elements. And in regard to the earth, they seem to have held very nearly the present puranic system of Hindooism—if that is not indeed the ancient Egyptian system—that it is a vast plain fixed in the centre of the universe, (with the Nile as the feeder of the oceans, having its source in heaven, and pouring down on the summit of some great cloud-capped mountain in the centre of Africa); and that it rests on the back of an immense tortoise, and that the tortoise rests on the back of a prodigious boar, but on what the boar rests, their philosophy could never discover. Indeed, in many respects, the Egyptian doctrines of religion and philosophy very nearly resembled present Hindooism, with sacred rivers and beasts, cosmogony, astronomy, astrology, and metempsychosis, and surely none, with any intelligence and powers of reason, will consider the Brahmins and Budhists of India as worthy, for a moment, to be spoken of as philosophers, or their opinions on religion, and science in general, to demand more respect than the pitying, if not contemptuous, smile of the little child.

Or look at the Grecian philosophy. Much is boasted of the sages of Greece: and yet how few they were—and how very few!—when we think of the number of centuries in which there was a professed

intellectuality. The few Greek minds worthy of notice are only those who were wise enough to reason that the idolatry was unsatisfactory, if not wholly false, but beyond this they never found the truth. Thales was the first, 600 years before Christ, who strongly doubted, and all but firmly denied the existence of the gods, and who sought for one who was yet unknown, and speculated on the probabilities of a Great First Cause, but never could assure himself of the fact. Pythagoras followed, and spent a life time in trying to find out truth, by examining all theories, and testing every thing by reason and experience, and died with all his anxieties of investigations unsatisfied. Socrates next rose, and turned his great mind to the solution of the moral nature and destiny of man, but though he reasoned in the right direction, and became a martyr to his infidelity in idolatry, yet, with the cup of hemlock in his hand, and about to pass into eternity, he could not see one clear ray of light on a future state. Perhaps, of all the ancient philosophers he did the most by reason that reason can do; and even were we to grant that he had found the truth, which he did not, it would only prove that the reason of one man had been sufficient to conquer all obstacles, for there has only been one Socrates in the whole pagan world. Plato and Aristotle, his pupils, next rose, and gave his opinions a systematic and developed character, and laid the basis of the present moral science; but still their philosophy was not sound, and in regard to what was an approximation to truth, we are inclined to go beyond the question what they—or Socrates before them—did by reason, and enquire how far they were not aided by the Hebrew faith and the Hebrew oracles, which it is impossible to suppose they did not know.* But all the philosophers, with all their knowledge, never could disperse the shadows that unaided reason esteemed to be realities, nor dispel the darkness that enveloped all human inquiries; and it was not till Christianity arose that there was a light to lighten the world; and the Apostle Paul on Mars-hill told the philosophers of

* One fact worthy of notice is, that though Socrates believed in the immortality of the soul, because, from the phenomena of dreaming, there seemed to be a principle within him, that had a degree of cognizance when the body was under the influence of sleep, and, therefore, inferred that it had an independent existence; yet, the chief reason he assigned for his belief was, *the opinion of former ages*. That is, he derived it from tradition. And whence the tradition? but a lingering ray of revelation, that the keen eye of the sage enabled him to perceive, through the obscurations of heathenism.

Atheo
solved
ing p
Th
world
Roma
is full
if any
that c
chang
of de
them
natur
dom
the a
prece
was
satisf
writi
heath
differ
didly
clara
call g
logy
of m
a fut
shou
gods
lived
them
from
S
in re
phil
phil
were
cent

Athens what they confessed they were unable to discover; and at once solved the question, "what is truth?" and which had been the absorbing problem of their philosophy for six hundred years.

The whole state of religion, philosophy, and civilisation of the heathen world, is described by St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and the truthfulness of the fearful picture, as regarded Rome, is fully established by Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Roman Satirists; and, if any are prone to boast of the ancient wisdom and virtue, let them read that chapter, and then we shall be surprised if their eulogies are not changed to intense disgust; and there, they will truly learn what a state of depravity mankind arrive at when they have no revelation to guide them, and when they are left to the uncontrolled propensities of an evil nature, and to follow the suggestions of a mind unilluminated by the wisdom of God. Cicero—who lived a hundred years before Christ, and had the advantage of gathering into his capacious mind all the reasonings of preceding sages—certainly came nearest to the truth. His philosophy was of the Greek school, and after the Socratic model, yet it failed to satisfy himself. His idea of virtue is the only thing that is remarkable in his writings, and remarkable, inasmuch that it is the only instance where a heathen sage has given the proof of arriving at a view of practical morals, differing so widely from the opinions that prevailed, and opposing so candidly the vices of his age; and as it is the only ancient philosophical declaration on morality, that we could venture, with certain limitations, to call good and wise. But great as Cicero was, he was still a fabulist in theology, and a complete errorist in natural philosophy—for only in his ideas of morals did he shine—and in regard to the immortality of the soul, and a future state, he had to make it his dying confession, that "whether he should live again or not, or whether it was better to live or to die, the gods alone could determine." Thus the last of the great philosophers lived, reasoned, doubted, and died; and his writings virtually convey in them his testimony, that man cannot be truly wise without a revelation from God.

Such is the outline of the conclusion to which we are forced to come in regard to the much-vaunted wisdom of the ancients. Egypt had her philosophers; but where have we the proof of the excellence of their philosophy? Greece had her "seven wise men,"—only seven! who were worthy of high place in the temple of reason—not even one in a century!—but allowing them all the merit of mental superiority that could

be claimed, we ask for the proof that they did what infidelity asserts that reason is capable of performing? Rome had her one philosopher, at all worthy of the name—only one!—and he proves, not the sufficiency, but the incapacity of the human mind for self-instruction in the highest subjects of belief, duty, obligation and destiny.

There was, however, a philosopher who, in his youth, "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and who did give the ancient world light, but it was not by the knowledge he had gathered from the colleges of the Nile. He got it during his "session" of forty days and forty nights, held on the cloud-covered, and lightning-guarded Sinai. God was the Teacher, and Moses was the Scholar—and that great Hebrew, not only immeasurably surpasses all heathen sages collectively, but a close examination, were we to enter on it, would afford strong evidence that, from his system, the most eminent of the heathen philosophers derived the few glimpses of approximating truths, which are to be obtained from their writings. Why is it that Moses should be overlooked in the infidels' catalogue of ancient philosophers? If they will deny his inspiration, still we demand that they deal fairly with his system. If he divulged it by the powers of his reason alone, then he stands, by far, the first of philosophers, and even Socrates and Cicero are intellectual dwarfs beside him. If it be said that Moses did not write it, and that it is not credible, yet here we have it—and it existed long before the Greeks had a sage—and the man who wrote it, whoever he was, is entitled to more honor than that which deism pays to its heroes. We do not take up the question of inspiration, but ask, are the writings of Moses superior to those of the heathen philosophers? and, if so, why does he not get credit for them? It will not do to tell us that there can be no inspiration, and therefore nothing is to be believed that assumes or asserts to be inspired; because, here are writings, which are superior, and are so, either because Moses was the greatest of ancient wise men naturally, or his greatness was caused by divine and direct instruction. Sceptics will allow no praise to the wisdom of the Hebrew legislator, but they boast of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero! and assert that their wisdom is enough for mankind; but, we ask, if they were so great, what did they accomplish for the religious and moral condition of the times in which they lived? If they could not, by their wisdom and personal influence, reform these, how can their systems possibly benefit this? If their wisdom failed then, it would fail now; and despised as the New Testament is by a godless

class
the
phil
ed, t
cient
3r
rema
An
how
made
proof
point
der, t
in the
of th
halo t
pared
of sty
ness
the n
Usi
we m
tions-
expre
junct
views
reason
speak
that p
ment-
mean
its res
these
of wis
in fir
gion,
becom
phy a

class, yet we will take up the writings of the fishermen of Galilee, and the Apostle Paul, and in these—in a single page—we will find more real philosophy, which the world can feel, and by which it has been blessed, than in all the writings, of all the philosophers, of the whole ancient heathen world.

3rd. The third, and last topic, in the first part of the subject, that now remains for consideration is, **THE CIVILISATION OF THE ANCIENTS.**

Ancient civilisation! how it has been bepraised by some historians: how it has been extolled in lecture-rooms of colleges: how it has been made to eclipse that which is modern, as its presumed and asserted proofs are carefully gathered and preserved in museums, and proudly pointed to by the antiquarian: and how travellers will narrate, with wonder, the character and magnificence of palaces, monuments, and temples, as in their hoary and fallen grandeur they are held to attest the high refinement of the people that erected them! We are well accustomed to behold the halo that has been made to encircle ancient civilisation, but we are not prepared to allow that it is other than a false glory, which modern admiration of styles of architecture that were remarkable for immensity of laboriousness and fineness of taste, has unheedingly cast over all that pertained to the nations which are now signalised by their monuments.

Using civilization not in a limited but in a broad and accurate sense, we must confess—even at the risk of sundry denunciations, if not accusations—that we have the same opinion of that of the ancients that we have expressed of their religion and philosophy. They were the tripartite conjuncts, that by necessity occupied the same level. If we are correct in our views of the religion and philosophy, how can it be otherwise than, that reason, independent of facts, should compel us to this opinion? Some do speak of civilisation leading to religion and philosophy: and others say that philosophy is the product of mind, a mere natural spiritual discernment—and they call it inspiration, though, by that they understand, and mean, no divine teaching—and that first, civilisation, and *then* religion, are its results. Sound reason and fact teach us, that the contrary to either of these views is the truth. Civilisation is not the parent but the offspring of wisdom and religion; and wisdom, or philosophy, that which is true in first principles, as well as useful to mankind, is, in fact, a part of religion, and has its beginning in the fear of God. Man, then, we maintain, becomes truly civilised, just in proportion as his religion and philosophy are derived from heaven. And, we ask, could civilisation, in its

proper acceptation, be expected from such systems of religion and philosophy as we have referred to? It is an axiom, "that like begets like," and therefore, from a debasing idolatry, how could its devotees be under the influence of proper sentiments, or display the sterling virtues? When it inculcated all that was gross, how could the people be refined? And when the philosophy was but an offshoot from the idolatry, and merely claimed a little more latitude of opinion, and had a little less superstition, but still sanctioned all that religion taught and tolerated, how was it possible that there could be civilisation? As well expect sweetness from the worm-wood, or to find a garden of roses on an iceberg, in an arctic sea, and an arctic night. Some of the ancients did, indeed, try, after their own fashion, to make society better, and they made their own mould in which the pattern statue of virtue was cast, and then exhibited; but none of them had a higher idea of virtue than self-interest, or love of approbation. Virtue, they said, was all that was required to elevate the social condition; but Aristotle defined it to be, only that which is praiseworthy; and Plato, that which is pleasant or profitable. They gave it no broader foundation than selfishness, and no higher object, or aspiration, than praise and self-advantage. Thus it was taught as an interest, not a duty: as a selfish motive, but not as a religious or moral obligation.

But let us settle what civilisation is. In the general application of it, it is, perhaps, the most indefinite of all terms. It is used comprehensively, loosely, or restrictedly, according to the individual idea. Some consider civilisation to be the perfection of man's whole condition in all his relations, interests, and acquirements; and hence, when they employ it, it is only in degree to the religious, moral, and intellectual excellencies which are found predominating. Others employ it to designate only a difference, and higher distinction from uncouth barbarism; and in this way apply it to ancient nations, such as Egypt, Greece and Rome, because, in certain respects, they were superior to other nations. This latter view merely contemplates what is external, and has little or no reference to what is true in religion, and pure and elevated in morality. We take the former view. Some may ascribe to Chaldea, and some to Egypt, the parentage of civilisation in the aeras before Christ, but we deny that there ever was any, from a period soon after the fall of man, till the introduction of the gospel, except, occasionally, what was enforced under particular reigns among the Jews, and when they strictly conformed to the

law of Moses. Our idea of ancient civilisation, is in the legislation of Moses, though it was peculiar, and not adapted for universality; and our idea of modern civilisation is embraced in the letter, and spirit of the legislation of Jesus Christ. Some may tell us that other causes, since the birth of Christ, have led to that which has been, and is; they may point to political influences, social amalgamations, the improvement and extension of science, and the decrease of superstition, and hence human freedom, independence, and greatness; but we go back to Christianity as the cause, for without it, we do not find in the long history of 1800 years, sufficient proof in any nation, of what we understand by the word. If by a civilised nation, is only meant one that was terrible in war, then, the Scandinavian hordes, Goths and Vandals, who rushed over Europe, were more civilised than the Romans. Then, by that estimate, as for a time, they were all victorious, they must have been *the* civilised! Their Hannibal, with his dusky Carthaginians scaling the Alps, and the fierce Moors invading Spain, must rank among the civilised! And why not? for if by war we are to judge; and victory or defeat makes the conqueror or the bandit, the hero or the rebel, so, in such a case, we ought to apply civilisation to the most victorious. Or, if it be estimated by the time a people have existed in the possession of letters, and certain arts, then the Arabs and Chinese have for ages surpassed the modern English. Or, if the estimate is to be by enormous pillars, extensive buildings, gorgeous temples, magnificent amphitheatres, and intricate sculptures, or historic bas reliefs, then, civilisation has been on the decline, for we have nothing modern to compare with what must have existed, as seen in the ruins at Rome, Palmyra and Baalbek, of Greece, and of Egypt. It is on such grounds, however, that, very often, the claims to ancient civilisation are made to rest, but it must be obvious that they are untenable—untenable, at any rate, in as far as moral intelligence views the subject. We are ready to allow, that many ancient nations were superior comparatively, that is, that they were, in certain points, superior to other nations, just as we admit that the Chinese surpass the Africans, the Turks the Malays, the popish peasantry of the south of Ireland the Thugs of India, the Mexicans the Patagonians, and our Indians the cannibals of the fair isles of the Pacific, but we maintain that they are uncivilised, all of them, in the proper sense of the term. Civilisation is the ascertained progress of mankind upwards to that which is definite, rational, and useful, in religion, science, art, and the social virtues. What though the Australian savage, the

miserable Ethiopian, or the warlike Kaffir built cities outrivalling Nineveh or Babylon, and palaces surpassing the most magnificent of those in Europe, or had temples that would vie with any in any age, yet we would not call him a civilised man!

There is a very common error held, and which, to a great extent, leads to a false notion of civilization. It is this: Many speak of the Indians, and all such uncultured tribes, as being in their natural state, or in the natural condition of man. Now, it is the very opposite, for they are in their unnatural state. In what state, we ask, was man at first created? Surely, it was not that of a savage! Surely, when he came from his Maker's hands in his Maker's image, in knowledge and true holiness; with an intellect unobscured by sin, and a heart unpolluted by vice; when he had Paradise as a birthright, and to "dress it and keep it" was the wholesome industry which was enjoined on him; when he was "made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour;" when "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them;" and therefore in the fullest vigour of every faculty, and the enjoyment of unalloyed innocence, and with God himself to hold communion, surely, the highest dignity of humanity was then; and therefore, the most natural state of man is that, in which he comes nearest to the great original, and civilization, consequently, must be judged of in proportion as the natural condition is regained. The more mankind become like God—the more that they have reinstamped on them the image that has been defaced, the more are they true to their original nature; and surely it is evident that Christianity, only, has done the little that has yet been effected, and that it alone is competent for the mighty enterprise to bring man up from the horrible pit of moral and spiritual degradation into which he has been sunk, and direct him to the now open and straight, and glorious path that leads back to Eden, to the lost image, and the lost innocence, to holiness, to happiness and to God.

There are other criterions of civilisation; such as the extension of human life; for it is a fact, in every country, that in proportion as vice or virtue predominates, as social order is despised or prevails, and as science is unknown or cultivated to ameliorate the physical condition, so is life short or long.—Then there is the condition of woman; for just as her virtue is protected, her mind cultivated, and her position and influence allowed her as the helpmate of man, so we have an index of the social state

of any people ; for the degradation of woman, and civilisation, can never harmonise.—Then there is commerce—in products of agriculture and manufactures, the active reciprocities that enlightenment engenders, and the cosmopolitanism that is cherished—for national seclusion is the proof of ignorance and fear, and mere barter of certain commodities for either luxuries or necessities—and thus have the name of trade—can never be taken as an evidence of civilisation. The Chinese are not civilised though they export tea and silks, and receive in exchange opium and gold ! The natives of the New Hebrides are not civilised because there is a trade with them in sandal wood, for which they receive beads, tobacco, and rum !—And lastly, there is the criterion of religion. It is not the having of a religion, simply, that we mean, but a religion that has a direct and distinct salutary influence on the moral character. India has its great temples ; and millions of divinities. There, religion constitutes a great part of the thoughts and works of the people, and yet we do not call the Hindoos civilised ; and why there is the propensity to dignify the nations of antiquity, and refuse the claim to this existing people, is a question that it is not our business to solve ; and we leave it to those who are ever so ready to boast of the greatness of the past, and extol the refinement of nations that cannot be shown to have been one whit superior to these very idolaters, that excite so deeply the interest and compassion of the humblest Christians in Britain and America.

Having stated what we mean by civilisation—which, if it is to imply anything real and worthy, is certainly the true definition, it is unnecessary to enlarge on this point, because a mere historical glance will satisfy the most credulous, that it would be an abuse, of what even the most lax understand by the word, to apply it to the ancient heathen. Yet there are facts—indelicate though they be—which ought to be known, and then, without a blush of shame, ancient refinement ! cannot be paraded for modern admiration. In the capital of Chaldea—and there is every reason for believing it was the same in that of Assyria—there were despotism and slavery, gross idolatry and gross licentiousness ; and such was the civilisation, that, by a religious law, every woman was obliged, once in her life, publicly to prostitute herself amid the debauching orgies of the temple of Milytta ! The religious law of Egypt enjoined the same. And the Israelites, when they at times adopted idolatry, and copying the surrounding nations, worshipped the queen of

heaven, are spoken of by the prophets as outrageous for their "whoredoms," and "enflaming themselves in groves and under every green tree." If ancient civilisation shall be asserted and admired, our morality insulted, and our religion depreciated, perish such civilisation, say we, and perish eternally, and let Nineveh "lie in heaps," and let the mounds of Nimroud be the graves of Assyrian glory; let Babylon be a "desolation and a place for dragons to lie down in," and the foetid and deadly miasma—fit type of its civilisation—forever rise from its marshes; and the screech owl forever give the dirge over its just fate; and let Egypt remain "as the basest of kingdoms." Greece and Rome are not exempted, for in both there was a progressive profligacy, "the sanctity and purity of the domestic hearth were undermined, and the roof-tree virtues, which are a nation's strength, gave way, and the vast edifice of Greek science and Roman power fell before the tide of social corruption." The temples of Juno, Venus, Bacchus, and Diana, were nothing else than the nation's brothels, sanctioned, sacred, and sanctified by a cursed idolatry. As far as we have history to guide us, we find the unvarying fact that idolatry produces demoralisation, and there has not been an ancient nation that has not owed its ruin to its social vices. We may speculate—where we have not the native history, from the histories of other lands—on the traces of lost civilisation—as they are called—in Central America, and on the Californian gulph; and while the hieroglyphics have not yet been deciphered, yet there is enough to prove, by crumbling monuments, wrecks of palaces, and temples over-grown with hoary forests, that once on this continent, a great race, with an Asiatic religion, and probably of Asiatic origin, had risen and decayed; and no doubt, as in all other cases, by the fatal influence of a corrupting and destructive idolatry.—Certainly, there was once a great nation, extending, in that region, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, but it has dwindled down to the untutored red men who roam the forests and prairies, and who now know nothing more than to construct the rude and frail wigwam. And the Aztec race, (if different?) once so famous, with an idolatry that was costly in its service but barbarous in its sacrifices, with an amount of skill in architecture that was great, but, in point of civilisation, could lay no just claim, fell before Cortes, and was utterly spoiled by Spanish cupidity, and destroyed by Spanish cruelty; and the heathen glory forever passed away, and left to conquerors and to ruin the royal palaces of the proud Montezumas. Of all ancient systems, Hindooism alone remains;

and in its proud, solitary, idolatrous grandeur, gives its living testimony to the nature of ancient heathenism, and points out to us the very-highest state at which mankind can arrive without divine revelation ; and teaches us the lesson that human reason is, of itself, feeble and fallible, and that it requires to be enlightened by celestial rays, and conscience and conduct corrected and directed by the teaching of God, before there can be truth in religion ; soundness in philosophy ; and virtue, happiness, prosperity, and stability in the social state.

PART II.

THE SECOND PART OF THE SUBJECT IS, TO BRING OUT THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ANCIENT HEATHENISM AND CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LEGITIMATE CONSEQUENCES, BY SHEWING THE INFINITE SUPERIORITY, IN ALL RESPECTS, OF THE LATTER OVER THE FORMER.

To a certain extent this has been already, indirectly, done, and the intelligent reader must have been making the contrast in his own mind as he proceeded, but it is still necessary that it be made a distinct part of our subject, and rendered more apparent and prominent. It has been shown what the state of the world was, when, with one exception, the nations "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and when they were untaught and unguided by divine revelation ; and this truth is taken for granted as established, that, as mankind religiously, morally, and socially were debased, and degenerated when without revelation, therefore, judging from experience, it is absolutely essential that they have some directory from heaven. Maintaining this necessity, Christianity, as asserting its revelatory character, and as the last and perfected system divulged by the Son of God himself, becomes so much the more evidently and practically "worthy of all acceptance," as its principles stand the test of reason, and its announcements and promises satisfy, stimulate, and gladden the highest and holiest aspirations of man, and its whole utility universally stands the test of experience. Christianity can do, for it has done, what all other systems have failed to accomplish, and that is proof, if not of its divinity, at least of its superiority.—On this ground it can be argued that, as man must have a religion, he should choose the best, and therefore choose Christianity, because it is the best.

But while we are willing to meet the rationalist or utilitarian on such low ground as that, and make him—for he cannot help himself—confess

to its supremacy, yet far be it from us to take our stand for Christianity on its temporal aspects, and its mere superiority to other religious systems, whether ancient or modern. From the success which has attended it; its first rapid progress; the prejudices which it engendered and removed; the hostilities which it encountered, endured and survived; and the civilisation which, by its principles and laws, has been given to many parts of the earth, we have strong evidence of its Divine origin; that it is God-given, God-sent, and God-supported and blessed, and that it has a power and vitality invulnerable by time, or change, or opposition:—but it is when its nature is examined that it stands erect, and high, and bright, and pure above every other system, and discloses the evidence of its Heavenly origin, its inspiration, and its perpetual adaptation to man in every place and phase of his being; and when thus viewed, reason must bow to it as declaring the wisdom of God. We can readily conceive it possible for a wise man to frame a system of what he considers to be moral duty, and which may be suitable for one people, and for a short period; but, as nations differ from each other in manners, customs and religion, the system which might be applicable for one would be unsuitable for another, and thus the sage of one country, would be esteemed a fool, in propounding his system to another:—and further, as every nation, sooner or later, changes in its character, relative position, and intercourse, it must be obvious that no man, of even the most exalted intellectual capacity and foresight, could make a code of morals and a religion which would suit all nations equally well, which would benefit them all, and which, in every place and age of the world, would be as practicable and valuable as at another. This, reason and experience teach us, is a fixed truth, that unaided reason cannot make a uniform universal religion;—and even Moses, Divinely-inspired as he was, did not attempt it. But if we find a religion adapted for all the world, then we say that “a greater than Moses is here,” and that it must be divine in its author, and consequently, divine in its authority. And such is Christianity, the Gospel of the Son of God. It claims to be for all, qualified to bless all, and capable of surviving in every clime, in every nation, and to the latest period of this world’s duration.

In drawing the contrast we shall consider the universal adaptation of Christianity to the SPIRITUAL, MORAL, and PHYSICAL conditions of man

1st. THE UNIVERSAL ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE SPIRITUAL

CONDITION OF MAN. By this is meant its adaptation to him as a being unable intuitively to know, or find the true religion; yet feeling his need of it, and its fitness for him in every circumstance, and in every condition; and by which he may be taught to know and worship the true God, and be brought from ignorance, superstition, and degradation; from the prison-house of Satan's slaves to the liberty of the sons of God; and to the enjoyment of the clear shining of Heaven's own orb of Spiritual illumination—the Sun of Righteousness—and by which the naturally-darkened understanding shall become radiant with its glory.

We have already shown the nature and consequences of pagan religions, and it must surely be granted that they were not adapted to benefit men, and the proof is, that they never did so. But Christianity is not simply different from, but directly opposed to all past systems. Were it to aim at making a universal uniformity of conventional customs, and habits, and government, and to accord with the natural corrupt reason and disposition; were it to come down to the level of man, and be a thing like himself, instead of drawing him up to its own high eminence, it would utterly fail. It is on these rocks that men have struck when they became religion-makers. They attempted too much in relation to what was social, and accommodated in what was moral to what was immoral; sanctioned vice rather than reformed it; tried to control rather than remove it; and thus, whenever a change took place in the government, customs, or intercourse of the nation where such religion had been established, that religion either perished at once, or was altered to suit new opinions, new times, and a new political and social state of things. The religions of men are changed by men to suit circumstances: the religion of Christ changes men, and controls circumstances into a conformity to its spirit and designs. Mohammedanism is an example of the former. It has been long upheld, and with a degree of unvarying regularity, but the lands in which it is are not one whit more advanced to-day, under its influence, than they were a thousand years ago; and because it has been, so far, unchanging, we can argue nothing from that in its favor, for, for many centuries there has scarcely been the least constitutional or social change in the countries in which it predominates, as, for instance, in Turkey and Persia. They have stood still, and consequently so has the religion.—But when once—as will be ere long—they are either subverted by other powers, or by revolutions have the governments popularised, and human

intercourse and commerce become more extended from without and within, Islamism must then fall, and be crushed among the wrecks of former delusions, idolatries and despotisms. But this is the peculiarity of Christianity—its wisdom, its power, and the spirit of its eternity—that it is silent on governments, customs, and habits, and aims only at stamping on the world great principles for belief and practice. It aims not at the rule of a nation, in the first place, but at the subjection of a man's own heart. It aims at the man, not at the mass. It divests itself, too, of every ceremonial by which it may be bound down to place, and to time. The Jew thought that it was at Jerusalem where he could only especially worship—that was the great fixed locality for his God; the Samaritan thought that it was on Mount Gerizim; the heathen thought that it could only be in their temples, and before their gods; but this is the great spiritual truth which Christianity unfolds, the truth that the wisdom of the world never could search out, the truth which liberates man from all ritual bondage, the glorious truth which brings him always to his God, and makes every spot a temple, and every house a house of prayer; it is the main truth, the first principle in our religion, that "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" and thus it frees itself from place and visible objects, and draws out the heart, pure and fervent, to the living God. The Turk, and Jew, cannot pray without turning in the supposed direction of Mecca, and Jerusalem, and if they do not know the direction, their religions do not guarantee the success of their prayers. The idolater cannot pray except when before his idol, and he cannot sacrifice except beside his consecrated altar. He must have his sacred times, and places, and objects of worship, and take him from his temples and his idols, and he is taken from his religion. No heathen form of worship can be exported. No heathen can travel beyond his native land and be religious too, for when he leaves his country he leaves his gods, and passes, at once, into the bleak region of atheism. The Hindoo, when taken from his sacred rivers, temples, idols, pilgrimages, and holy scenes, is rendered religiously helpless, and becomes godless and prayerless. His religion is a fixture in India, and beyond that it cannot go. But here is the contrast with Christianity. It is the same everywhere; in the burning tropics and the eternal winters of the poles: for, the Christian recognising the spiritual existence of God, and holding by a spiritual worship, is ready on every

spot, and at every time, to call upon his Maker. And when the mind is imbued with this principle, and let man wander where he may, and when he can lift his eyes to Heaven, and even in unwhispered language breathe out his prayer to his Great Protector, he carries with him everything that is vital in his religion. The temple of the Christian is the wide earth on which he dwells; and the Being whom he worships is a Spirit, and his own spirit pays its holy tribute to the Parent of its existence.

We read in the Book of Judges, when a company of warlike Danites carried off the gods, ephod and teraphim, from the house of Micah, "a man of Mount Ephraim," that he pursued and said, "ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and the priest, and ye are gone away, and what have I more?" His gods were his religion, and with them it went; and this is the frail foundation on which all idolatry rests. It is material. It is perishable. It is liable to disaster. But Christianity exalts its head above all changes and accidents. It carries in itself the very essence of immortality: for take from a christian his churches, his ordinances, his long accustomed forms; aye, take from him even the Bible itself, and yet his religion will live. It is in his heart; and the heart will find its God. It is this spirituality that adapts it universally as the religion for man; but take that from it and it would be like Samson shorn of his locks; or by another comparison, deprive it of this, and it would be like taking the very sap and vigour from the tree of life.—It was because the heathen systems had no spirituality; because they had left the spiritual and taken to the visible that they decayed so rapidly, and were so perpetually changing; and, on the opposite, had it not been for this spirituality in our religion—we may call it the very soul of its existence—it could not have been maintained. Persecution could waste it were it bound down to earth, or did the earth contain one visible object essential to its life; but, as it is, it carries in itself its own indestructibility. It is thus immortal, for being spiritual, it is beyond the reach of men to destroy it. The Christian may be persecuted, he may be exiled, or suffer on the scaffold, or in the flames, but there is deeply and safely lodged in his heart, that which an enemy's wrath cannot reach, nor his tortures extract. He may be fettered in the dungeon, but no power, or manacles of man can chain down his spirit, as it rises to the very throne of God, to pay its unconquered homage of devotion. There is the electricity of mind and thought, as on a telegraph of faith, that cannot be restrained; or, if you will, there is the law of spiritual

gravitation, as well as the natural one, and by which the mind of the Christian is drawn to the Great Centre Mind, and no human power can break, or derange, the mysterious, and noble, and holy principle.

Now, to sum up this part in a sentence:—Man can form only systems like himself, full of errors, and liable to decay; but here is a spiritual faith adapted for man, for mind, for every place, and for perpetuity; and from the contrast we have only one conclusion we can draw, and it is, that this is the true religion, and that its Author is divine. Other systems, like the grass of the field, have already either withered and decayed, or, by their very nature, are destined to perish, “but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

2nd. We now proceed to the second point of the contrast, which is, THE UNIVERSAL ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE MORAL CONDITION OF MAN. By this is meant its adaptation to man, considered in relation to his intellectual condition, as endowed with reason, and capable of great progress; in his relations in the social state, and his progress in the virtues; to the code of morality which should govern the individual, and the laws which should govern nations. Here we bring ancient religion, philosophy, and civilisation to the test, and here the Gospel not only comes in, and claims the superiority, but is supported by indubitable evidence that it can accomplish what it claims as its mission, and that, whether viewed as a system of religion, or philosophy, or civilisation, or the whole combined, it has succeeded when others utterly failed. No heathen system that was ever known, could, or did, make the nation that adopted it any better. The Greek philosophers, trying, century after century, with the utmost energies of their minds, could never make a moral code that could survive the next political change. They never could get hold of great moral principles—that is, to be convinced that they were principles—and, therefore, their notions of morality were perpetually changing. Even Solon, perhaps the wisest of the great Seven Grecian Sages, even he, much as he is praised, and much as he is said to have done for morals, yet never attempted a change in religion; and the value of his morality may be judged of from the fact that he built several temples in honour of the gods, among which was one that he consecrated to VENUS PANDEMOS, the goddess of wantonness, and the priestesses of which were the public strumpets of Athens. How a certain class of infidels, when deriding revelation, and extolling reason to be

very high, do adduce Solon (!) as an example—they would have us believe—of the mental powers of man, and boastingly tell us that we require not the teaching of Jesus Christ! But to such we give the declaration of God, and ask them if it has not been fulfilled. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." And at such we would ask the questions of Paul: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" And such, and all whom they, or their opinions, are likely to influence, we would admonish, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ."

As it was among the Greeks, so it was among the Romans. And the same facts hold good with all existing religions which differ from Christianity. They are a curse and not a blessing to those who hold them. The principles and practices of heathenism are, indolence, dishonesty, selfishness, hatred, revenge. The Hindoo will appeal to his religion to vindicate him for a lie. The Thug will appeal to his religion as sanctioning his systematic thefts and murders. The Indian of America will appeal to his ancestral faith for his authority to have the life of his enemy, and why no injury to himself or his tribe should be left unrevenged: and his very hopes of future bliss are thus cherished; and that he may at last, by the proofs of his fidelity as an avenger, and by the number of scalps of his enemies which hang at his belt, be permitted to reside with the Great Spirit in the happy hunting grounds of the brave. We have only to take a glance at any part of the heathen world, and we shall not fail to see that there is there, no morality, no great ameliorating principle, and that the religion is totally inadequate to effect any good.—Africa is a land of spiritual and moral darkness; and it is full of horrid cruelties. Asia has its heathenisms just as gross, but perhaps a little more humane: and it has its Mohammedanism, with the only little truth-like that is in it, borrowed from Christianity. And the melancholy moral picture is, over the whole world the same, that where the religion of Christ is not, there have congregated the human miseries, and the human vices, whose names are legion.

All false systems of religion have had embodied in them principles, and have disclosed sentiments, altogether unworthy of God; being contrary to reason, science, and experience; and which never succeeded in reforming

man, but only in accommodating themselves to his carnal mind, and by a certain superstitious check, still giving scope to his evil propensities. But how different is Christianity, both in its principles and tendencies? It directs and sustains sound reason, never opposes it, and in not a line can a keen-eyed and accurate science detect an error. Science, it is true, may doubt, or dispute some Bible statements as they are simply recorded; but these, nevertheless, if fairly examined, will admit, unimpaired, of a scientific solution: and, while we allow that the language of the Bible is not characterised by scientific accuracy, yet the truths of real science and of scripture can never possibly be discordant; for, are not nature and revelation both from God; and must not, therefore, the facts of both, when rightly understood, be in the most perfect harmony? False systems have always adapted themselves to man as he is; they have always been on a level with fallen nature; but Christianity condemns man as he is. It speaks authoritatively to him, not with the voice of a sage, but with the voice of God; and it seeks not merely to regulate him in his vices, but commands him to abandon them, and "to be perfect, as his Father who is in Heaven is perfect." It demands a new and a better life, and not even that alone, but it asks a complete change. It aims at transforming man into a new creature; and as the condition of realising his hopes of future happiness, asserts and declares, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Now, wise, or scientific men, in ancient times, could not have formed such a system, for their ideas of religion and morals were completely opposed to what we find in the Bible; and their scientific opinions, such as they were, were entirely different from those alluded to, either in the Old or New Testament, and opposed, as darkness is to light, to modern discoveries, and undoubted and acknowledged facts. If the Bible, in its parts, New or Old, had been a system given by either merely wise or cunning men, it might have been expected to have contained the sentiments on science which they entertained; but as it does not, there is only one of two conclusions we can come to, either that, in writing, they deviated from their own belief, and by guess made statements contrary to what they held, but which now accidentally turn out to be reconcilable with received science—which is more than our reason can receive; or, that such men did not write the Bible, and that those who did, were "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Again, heathen men could not have invented such a religion as this, for it was im-

possible for them to have stated the truth concerning God, when they had not yet found it. And bad men could not have invented it, for a clean thing could not come from an unclean—and we have already seen the nearest approach that the very best of the sages made to it, and how miserably they failed—and though even bad men could have invented it, they would not; for they would not have condemned their own opinions and vices. And who then devised it? Who had that all-comprehensive-ness of knowledge, wisdom, and purpose, that could see and supply the moral wants of the world; and could form a code for the multiform conditions, varieties, and habits, of the human family through all ages?—Who knew so well the maladies of human nature, that could tell of one, and only one, all-sufficient remedy? Who gave this gospel tree of life for the healing of the nations; whose root shall hold firm through every storm; whose leaf is ever green; and whose branches shall spread till they extend their peaceful shade over every race, and every clime?—Who told us of sin and its miseries; of God and his worship; of Jesus and his salvation; of heaven and its blessedness? It was not man. All that was above him. His intellectual powers, and contemplations, and designs, are too feeble and contracted for that. His wisdom is too earthly and fallible, and his knowledge and virtue too limited and impure for that. The philosophy of the religion of the Bible is altogether contrary to what human reason ever held or annunciated, as well as being above its grasp. And here, then, in the Bible, is a system so different from all human conceptions and considerations, and that shines in that lustre of perfect holiness, which could only emanate from God; and which is filled with such wisdom that could only be found in the mind, and declared by the voice of Omniscience.

Christianity, then, is adapted for man's moral nature, and intellectual and social elevation; and it—for it only—has done, and can do, what all the religions and laws of man have failed to accomplish. And what would be the glorious consequence, were it all-pervading and all-prevailing? What would be the world's moral condition, if the two short, simple, but all-comprehensive rules, were universally obeyed—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself?" Ah! let the world take for its Statute Book the divine religion of Jesus, and the long hideous train of idolatry, error, vice, and crime will flee, as the shades of night, from before the luminary of day. And where is

one rule in it which is unsuited to man equally in every condition, and in every land? Where is there a country, now groaning in the bondage of idolatrous immorality, that would not by it be set free? We can find no exceptions. Christianity is adapted to be a universal blessing, and the range of dominion which it claims is world-wide; and examining it in its every principle and law, we know not where we can limit its power, progress, and triumphs, till it shall have eradicated the curse from the earth, and brought man to happiness and communion with his God as in primeval times, and made nature to smile in all the loveliness of a restored paradise. We believe in such a result, in the "times of restitution of all things," and therefore we hope for it. The tide-wave of it is swelling and rolling on, and it will yet the more rise, and swell, and flow, till it shall have swept before it and overwhelmed all that now opposes it, and to which it is opposed. Every Dagon must yet fall before this ark, and be broken in pieces. And reason and faith, joining hand-in-hand in drawing their conclusions from the teachings of the same Word, see a coming age when the earth, in the jubilee of its freedom, shall take up, and re-echo, and prolong Christianity's native anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men;" when there shall be the universal and grateful homage that mankind will pay to Jesus, their Liberator, Legislator, and Saviour; and "when men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed."

3rd. The third and last part of the contrast is, THE UNIVERSAL ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MAN. By this is meant, its adaptation to man in his physical being, circumstances and relations.

It has already been said, that man is not in his natural, but in his unnatural state. He has been driven by sin out of his first and true position; he is fallen, both physically and spiritually; the wonderful mechanism of his frame is deranged; and there are elements around which perpetually work havoc on his constitutional tendencies and susceptibilities, for the very earth is not in its original or perfect state either, but is cursed for his sake. In other words, the dire effects of the fall extended to the earth too, and its beauties, and powers, and capacities for sustaining life and health, and giving enjoyment, degenerated in proportion as man degenerated. The moral and physical scales were evenly balanced. The inhabitants and the habitation were made to correspond. An adaptation of each to the other was the divine law. A world without a woe, for man

without sin. A world blasted, for man a sinner. It does not follow, however, that the degeneracy of man and nature was completed, and all the miseries experienced at once. Man at once became a sinner, but he did not at once sink to the lowest depths of depravity. He lost the high favour and communion of his Creator, but he still knew God, and he still worshipped him, though in a different spirit, a different character, and through a new medium. The change was from sight to faith, from innocence to consciousness of guilt, and from possession to hope. The progress of humanity downward was rapid, but not immediate; for when God looked down from heaven on Adam, and Abel, and Seth, he saw the smoking altars of their penitential faith, and heard the wail of sorrow over Paradise lost; but as men began to multiply on the face of the earth, sin multiplied in its power and extent, and at last, after sixteen hundred years, "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil and that continually." And it was the same with the earth, for while, at the verdict of God, various elements might begin to derange it, yet it was not in a day they had their full power and completed their devastation. When the curse was pronounced, the flowers of Eden did not at once languish and die; the corn did not shrivel, and the thistle rush up in its stead; the trees of the wood did not become stunted, and the thorn spread its armed barrier against man's progress over his domain; the green fields did not become parched, and their brutal population begin to cry and faint in the agonies of hunger; nor were the "rivers of waters" less clear, and full, and fertilizing; the Pison still compassed the aural Havilah; Gihon still spread itself through the land of Cush; Hiddekel, and the lordly Euphrates still rose, up among the mountains that begirt the north of the primitive fatherland, and flowed, through the forest and mead, with unimpaired majesty to the mighty ocean.

Some, we know, take a different view, and maintain that the effects of the curse on nature, were instantaneous, and directly from God; and that, in producing these, man had no part. Without entering into the metaphysics of the subject, we would simply put it thus. If it be allowed—and it is—that in the future age, that better period which is predicted and anticipated, the earth is to be delivered, to a great extent, from the curse, by the universal evangelisation of mankind; that as they become holy the earth is to become better, and arrive nearer to its prim-

itive condition: why, then, should it not be equally allowed, that as mankind became worse, the earth also sunk in its constitution and capacities? Why is it believed that the earth will rise physically as man rises morally, and yet not believed that, in the past, it sank as man sank? Why allow the cause to have its effect in the one case and not in the other? Why allow to the gospel, through man, to bless, and deny to sin, through man, to curse? No miracle is expected to restore, to some degree, the bloom of the early Eden; and why should a miracle be demanded to blast it? Why should the reverse of causes, on simple laws, not cause the reverse of consequences? There are certain great laws subsisting between the moral and the physical, and violate, or keep the former, and the latter is injured or maintained. Hence, then, we hold, that as by sin man fell, so fallen man spread the ruin over all his external circumstances and interests; and never can the ruin be repaired, except by the power and gospel of Him who can make us again "partakers of the divine nature," and cause "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

The Apostle Paul, in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, represents the whole condition of the world, animate and inanimate, as sensitive of a curse, and eagerly longing for deliverance, "for the earnest expectation of the creature," or more correctly, the creation "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"—"because the creature," or creation "itself, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Here we hold that St. Paul takes the ground that the universal curse is to be much mitigated, if not entirely removed, by the influence of the gospel; and while "the creature" or creation "was made subject to vanity, not willingly," yet there is an approaching period for its emancipation, for though thus in bondage without any volition of its own, it has been "by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." Hope of what? Deliverance. —The Apostle Peter evidently refers to the same fact, and that it is to be realised before the second coming of Christ, and under the present economy, when he says "whom," that is Jesus, "the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

And what light does ancient inspired prediction cast on the world's future? When we take the prophets' roll and open it, there we can

read, with brightened eye, and swelling heart, and highest hope, the announcement of the new and glorious age that is to be ushered in. Nature, through all its amplitude, is not for ever to sigh in manacles, nor its primitive powers to remain paralysed in the coil of the betrayer, nor its Creator to remain unglorified in the work which at first he beheld, and pronounced to be very good. Nature has lost its paradisaical perfections, but it shall not be always so: "for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert," and there shall be the music of rivulets in the thirsty land; the wastes are to become fertile; and where now the warlike nomad knows no boundaries, and acknowledges no proprietor, the husbandman shall have his undisturbed possession, and rejoice in the plenty of a remunerative toil; and the arid saharras of Africa, and the gloomy deserts of Asia, which are now dried by the winds of the wilderness, and swept by the fiery breath of the Simoom, shall yet be sparkling with fountains, be green in the loveliness of spring, and golden in the richness of autumn; and the oases which now lie in them, green in the midst of desolation, are the emblems of that hope, and that future of nature's universal fertility.——And on the irrational animal creation, now at war with man, and he with them, and they with each other, the Bible, also, casts the light of a glorious future, when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fattling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And in that millennial age of universal peace, it is the express declaration of God in regard to his people, "I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."——And for man, now alienated from God in his mind and by wicked works, unhappy in himself, and in his condition, and subjected to innumerable miseries, a better state is predicted. Then, no one shall need to be taught, "know the Lord;" no land of idols shall be found then; for the missionary enterprise shall

have been completed, and child and sire alike shall be under gospel influence. Unholy war shall have ceased, and the sword given place to the ploughshare, and the spear to the sickle. Then ravaging pestilences, and even the ordinary diseases now incident to humanity, shall be removed, as the Gospel, the great prescription book of the Divine physician, shall have its temporal influence in directing to the remedies for the maladies of man. Then shall human life be prolonged as in Antediluvian times; and the age of the patriarch now, will then be the mere childhood of man. "No more shall there be an infant short lived, nor an old man that hath not fulfilled his days; for he that dieth at a hundred years shall die a boy; and the sinner that dieth at a hundred years shall be deemed accursed. And they shall build houses and shall inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and shall eat the fruit thereof. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people; and they shall wear out the works of their own hands. My chosen shall not labour in vain, neither shall they generate a short lived race; for they shall be a seed blessed of Jehovah; they and their offspring with them."* Such is the glorious vision of the future; and all hail! to the progress and triumphs of Christianity by which the world is to be blessed. By the Bible we are enabled to look forward in hope. In it we can hear the true voice of the future; for it is the oracle of heaven in regard to our destiny, and incomparably better than ever spoke at Delphi, or Epirus, or through the auspices of Roman Augurs. Its faith is most glorious, its predictions most certain, its hopes most cheering, and its promises most true; for "the words of the Lord are pure words, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

To all this it may be said, that it is not simple prophecy, but the imagery in which it is clothed, that is taken to illustrate the consequences of Christianity. And why not? Even granting all to be imagery, still, imagery in the word of God means something, and that adduced must mean, at the very least, that there is to be a great and surprising change for the better; and if imagery it be, it proves that the change is to be so extraordinary, that plain statement will fail to describe it; and that imagination must be brought in to its aid. But we take all to be literal

* Bishop Lowth's translation, Isaiah lxx. 20-23.

fact. The prophets have partially drawn aside the veil, and enabled us to have a collection of vivid glimpses of the future. The pen of inspiration has given the grand outlines of the gospel when in its perfect work. And is it to be doubted, or denied, that such delineations cannot be realised? Look at the principles of the Bible, and the nature of their operations, and can such success be doubted? We see in the religion of Jesus not merely the means by which the soul may be sanctified and saved, and a celestial state of perfection eternally obtained; but also the principles and sure directory for every thing that is great and good, for true civilisation, intelligence, and human happiness. We cannot set a limit to it, short of prophetic description, without acknowledging that it has some weak point, some defect, and that it is not competent to the work of successfully overcoming sin and all its consequences.

Let us glance at present results. Compare Christian countries—and even the best of them are very far from being properly Christianised, but compare them as they are with heathen lands—and is there not already, to a certain extent, a fulfilment of predictions? Is it to be esteemed a strange, or an impossible thing, that the desert can be reclaimed, and become abundantly fertile? Already it has been done, and many a barren track is now converted, by industry and intelligence, into fruitfulness; and many a bleak region of marshes, whose miasmata spread death around it, is now luxuriant with plenty for man and beast, and is become a scene of rural beauty, health and happiness. When the gospel was written, Britain exhibited as miserable a physical and moral spectacle as could well be conceived. Its barbarian inhabitants were separated into fierce tribes, and roaming in painted nakedness in their savage freedom, and contending with each other in sanguinary strife. They had the sun and moon as divinities, and idols of wood and of stone, with imaginary attributes as fierce, and with a worship as gross as ever can be found in heathen lands; and there were the Druids' mystic circles, in which every superstition was hallowed, and the horrid altars on which human sacrifices were freely offered. And what has produced so marvellous a change, that, that glorious little island is now the bright spot to which the liberty of the world looks for help, and the darkness of the world looks for light? It is because Christianity there planted her foot, and lighted her torch, and fixed her throne; and there may she ever hold empire, that the rock of Albion may be the security for the spiritual,

moral, and physical emancipation of degraded man. Why, we may ask, have we here, on this continent, such mighty and rapid changes going on ; why are our rivers and lakes ploughed by magnificent steamboats, instead of being skimmed by the tiny canoe of the red man ; why have we on spots, that a few years ago were forests or swamps, the noble street, instead of the Indian trail ; and the elegant mansion, instead of the rude and frail wigwam ; why have we busy commerce, fertile fields, and political and educational advantages unsurpassed on the globe ; why have the howl of the wolf and the warwhoop of the Indian ceased ; and why are security and peace enjoyed, and plenty crowning the industry of the population ? The reply is simple ; it is obvious. Civilisation has been at work ; but still, civilisation is nothing more than a consequence of Christianity.

It is needless to dwell on that point, for the least reflection will satisfy any one that, to a certain extent, prophecy has been fulfilled ; and from ascertained results, we have proof that it is the tendency, as it is in the power, of the Gospel to accomplish what is predicted of its ultimate glories.—Now, we ask, what other system of religion has had, or from its principles could have, such beneficent consequences ? All others have produced the very contrary ; and the proof of this we have already furnished ; for though we may go back to Egypt with its canals, its mechanical skill, its pyramids, its temples, and its sculptures, there were still a social system of castes, and a religion, idolatrous in the extreme, which corrupted and destroyed. Or, though we may go to Greece for Corinthian capitals, and Doric columns, and see there proof of architectural taste, yet the moral sense of the people was blunted, and socially, they were sunk in licentiousness ; and we have no greater right to take these as evidences of high civilisation, than we have to take the enormous stones of Stonehenge, which seem to have formed part of a large Druidical temple, as proving the scientific greatness and civilisation of the ancient Britons ; or the Gothic architecture of Britain in the 13th century as evidence of her philosophy and refinement. No, it is not the architecture of the temple that proves the truthfulness and value of the religion therein maintained ; else, were this the criterion, wrong would often be substituted for right, error for truth, and paganism for Christianity.

From all facts, and all history, we come to the conclusion, that the light of nature, or reason, has failed. Nature erects no cross, proclaims

no Saviour, exhibits no mercy-seat, publishes no infallible moral law. Reason! it bewildered the ancient world, and its light left antiquity in grossest darkness; and we can now see it in the vast idolatries and mental stupidities of India and China, in the horrors of Africa, and in the universal curse that is every where on man, where heathenism has its sway. And further, we find that all the religious systems propounded by reason, have been, and are, ruinous to the human intellect, subversive of sound morality, and socially degrading.

But we need not stop, only with making the comparison between Christianity and heathenism, for we can come even into the circle of christendom, and compare results between a spurious christianity and that which is genuine; and we shall find, whether we compare the Italian states with England; Spain with Scotland; the South of Ireland with the North; Mexico with the United States; and the shores of the St. Lawrence with the shores of Ontario, the same fact everywhere visible between Popery and Protestantism, that the former degrades, the latter elevates. Everywhere it is the fact, that the purer the Christianity the happier, the more prosperous, and the more intelligent are the populations. Popery is just one remove from ancient idolatry, with a Jewish ritual, and a Christian nomenclature. It is Mariolatry, under the claimed protection of the Bible; and it leaves its stamp on man, and on the face of the earth, wherever it can fasten its tenacious grasp; and while the word, progress, is written in letters of gold on the brow of Protestantism, that word is written in blackness on the back of popery, and in the horrid hieroglyphics of the Inquisition.

The contrast, then, is not only in favor of Christianity, but of a pure Christianity. Give man the Bible, the true Bible, and the whole Bible, and teach him to read it and understand it, and it becomes in his heart and in his hand the mighty instrumentality for his spiritual and physical redemption. The Bible! It is the wisdom of God. It unfolds and confers the "Truth," the "Summum Bonum," the "Philosopher's Stone," and the "Elixir of Life," which all the researches of ancient sages and alchemists could never discover. And if it be asked, when shall these glorious consequences of Christianity be realised, we take the Bible to find our reply; and there we have the true philosophy of the whole case, and the connection that subsists between true religion, true happiness, and the earth's fertility. "LET THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE, O GOD, LET ALL

THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE. THEN SHALL THE EARTH YIELD HER ENCREASE, AND GOD, EVEN OUR OWN GOD, SHALL BLESS US."

Faith now takes Reason by the hand—for Reason is now willing to be led by the celestial sister—and meekly and lovingly they kneel down together, and with one eye fixed on the future, and the other lifted up to God, they unite in the one earnest and hopeful prayer. THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS DONE IN HEAVEN.

ERRATA.

Page 14--line 24—for "Jupiter," read Zeus.

Page 18—line 14—for "moral," read natural.